

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at [Wellness Articles | Alberta Health Services](#)

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What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by the monkeypox virus. It can infect humans. It's usually mild and most people recover on their own after a few weeks. However, some people can get very sick and even die. Early symptoms may include:

- fever
- chills
- swollen lymph nodes
- headache
- muscle pain
- joint pain
- back pain
- exhaustion (feeling very tired)

Most people with monkeypox infection will get a rash or sores on their hands, feet, mouth, and genitals. The rash can last 14 to 28 days. You can spread monkeypox to others from the time your symptoms start until the rash goes away and your skin heals.

Who is most at risk?

You're at risk if you have close contact with someone who has monkeypox (for example, you live with the person or have sexual contact with them). You may be at higher risk of getting very sick if you:

- have a weak immune system
- are under 18 years old
- are pregnant.

How does it spread?

Monkeypox spreads through close contact with someone who has monkeypox. It may also spread if you have contact with bedding, sheets, or clothing that touches the rash and has virus on it. The virus enters the body through broken skin or your eyes, nose, or mouth.

How can I prevent monkeypox from spreading?

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer often.
- Don't touch your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze into your arm or a tissue, not your hand.
- Stay home when you're sick or have skin sores.
- Practice safer sex (use condoms or other barriers against skin-to-skin contact).
- Avoid close contact with people who have monkeypox and their clothing, towels, or bedding.

Who should get Imvamune?

You may be able to get this vaccine if you are 18 years old, or older, and have a higher risk of being exposed to monkeypox. You may have a higher risk if you belong to the gay, bisexual, or men who have sex with men (gbMSM) community and:

- You have more than one sexual partner.
- You attend or work at places where people may have sexual or skin-to-skin contact with more than one partner (such as bath houses, sex clubs, or sex parties).
- You have had a sexually transmitted infection in the last six months.

If you have or are planning on having sexual contact with someone who could be at higher risk, you may also be able to get this vaccine.

You should also get this vaccine if you had close contact with someone who has monkeypox. It's best to get this vaccine within four days of close contact, but you can get it up to 14 days after. Once your symptoms start, you can no longer get the vaccine.

If you are under 18 years old, talk to your healthcare provider before getting this vaccine.

For more information about the monkeypox vaccine, go to ahs.ca/monkeypox or go to [ImmunizeAlberta.ca](https://immunizealberta.ca) or call Health Link at 811.